



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the
United States Attorney
for the
District of Nebraska
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February 24, 2009

United States Attorney Joe W. Stecher and the Nebraska State Patrol announce the following information for the attention of the media:

Event Triggering this Release:

The Honorable Richard G. Kopf, United State District Judge, sentenced Silbestre Barragan-Penalosa to eight years in federal prison for his role in conspiring to distribute cocaine in the United States. Barragan-Penalosa was also ordered to serve five years on supervised release following completion of his prison term.

On February 26, 2008, a Nebraska State Patrol trooper stopped a speeding vehicle driven by Silbestre Barragan Penalosa on Interstate 80 outside Lincoln. Also in the vehicle was Yesenia Millan Gonzalez and two of her children, ages eight and three. After receiving consent to search the vehicle, troopers found a concealed compartment attached to the vehicle's undercarriage. It held approximately 50 pounds of cocaine.

Although several factors, including Barragan-Penalosa's lack of a prior criminal record, allowed Judge Kopf to impose a sentence below the mandatory statutory minimum, the time he was ordered to serve was increased after a finding that he and the passenger had used her two children in an attempt to convince law enforcement that the drug run was an innocent family vacation. The children were placed into custody of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

Name of Defendant: Silbestre Barragan-Penalosa

AKA:

Age: 29

City of residence: Phoenix, Arizona

Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty (A CHARGE is merely an accusation and every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty):

Conspiracy to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and aiding and abetting the same
10 to life in prison, up to \$4,000,000 fine, not less than five years supervised release

Specific Location of

Alleged Crime: conspiracy

Location of Arrest:

Alleged Dollar Loss/Type and Quantity of Drug: 49 pounds of cocaine

Others Charged in Same Scheme: Ysenia Millan Gonzalez

Relevant Dates:

Date of Alleged Crime: February 26, 2008

Federal Arrest Date: March 25, 2008

Date Complaint Issued:

Indictment Returned Date: March 19, 2008

Initial Appearance Date: March 25, 2008

Plea or Trial and Date(s): pled December 2, 2008

Sentencing Date: February 24, 2009

Next Court Hearing Type and Date:

Assigned Magistrate Judge: David L. Piester

Held without Bond, or Released from Custody: held

In Continuous Custody Since: February 26, 2008

Assigned District Court Judge: Richard G. Kopf

Initials of Assigned SAUSA/Preparer of THIS Release: jml